

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) Composite material with a specific density in the range of 0.8 g/cm³ to 1.2 g/cm³, comprising:

one or more grains of a non-metallic inorganic material with a specific surface area in the range of 10,000 m²/m³ to 1,000,000 m²/m³, having a porosity in the range of 10% to 80% wherein at least 50% of the pores have a pore size in the range of 0.1 μm to 1000 μm, and wherein more than 50% of the grains have a grain size in the range of 0.1 mm to 50 mm; and

one or more plastics particles with a specific density in the range of 0.6 g/cm³ to 1.2 g/cm³, and a specific surface area in the range of 50 m²/m³ to 1000 m²/m³, wherein more than 50% of the plastics particles have a particle size in the range of 0.01 mm to 100 mm.
2. (Previously Presented) The composite material according to claim 1, wherein the non-metallic inorganic material has a specific surface area in the range of 25,000 m²/m³ to 500,000 m²/m³.
3. (Previously Presented) The composite material according to claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of non-metallic inorganic material to plastics particles lies in the range of 15:85 to 85:15.
4. (Currently Amended) A method of carrying bacteria comprising:

contacting the bacteria with ~~Use of~~ the composite material according to claim 1, such that the composite material carries bacteria as bacteria-carrier material.
5. (Currently Amended) The ~~use method~~ according to claim 4, wherein bacteria is carried in plants for water treatment.
6. (Currently Amended) The ~~use method~~ according to claim 4, wherein the specific density of the composite material corresponds to the specific density of the surrounding material.
7. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing the composite material according to claim 1, comprising:

mixing the grains of non-metallic inorganic material with the plastics particles;

filling the mixture into a mould;

melting the surface of the plastics particles; ~~and optionally pressing together the plastics particles having a melted surface with the grains of the non-metallic inorganic material either simultaneously with or following melting the surface of the plastics particles.~~

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, comprising adding a plastics powder having a grain size in the range of 0.2 mm to 1.5 mm, a specific density in the range of 0.6g/cm³ to 1.2g/cm³ and having a melting point not more than 10% above that of the plastics particles and not more than 30% below that of the plastics particles made from a material identical to or similar to the material of the plastics particles, wherein the plastics powder is added before melting the surface of the plastics particles.
9. (New) The method according to claim 7, comprising pressing together the plastics particles having a melted surface with the grains of the non-metallic inorganic material either simultaneously with or following melting the surface of the plastics particles
10. (New) A method for the biological treatment of water, comprising treating water with a composite material according to claim 1, wherein the composite material is a bacteria carrier material.
11. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein the water is treated in a plant.
12. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein the water is treated in a sewage treatment plant, a bioreactor or a fermentation reactor.
13. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein the water is treated in a sewage treatment plant.
14. (New) The method according to claim 10, wherein the specific density of the composite material corresponds to the specific density of a surrounding material.